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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 11 SANTO DOMINGO 002294

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DOMINICAN ELECTIONS #36: THE PLD PLATFORM, IN BRIEF

[¶](#)1. (SBU) Following is no. 36 in our series on the Dominican elections.

Dominican Elections #36: The PLD Platform, in Brief

Leonel Fernandez's Partido de Liberacion Dominicana is the only one of three parties to have produced a formal election platform. The full text in Spanish is available either on the PLD website (http://www.pld.org.do/02-documentos/programa_2004.pdf) or on our SIPRNET site (<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/wha/santodomingo/>). Following is our precis in English of the 150-page document. A precis of the precis: the PLD takes a socially conscious market-friendly approach to government, trusting in rational analysis and moral values. And though the cover is in vibrant PLD gold-and-purple, the major chapters are headed by warm pencil-drawn graphics.

[¶](#)2. (U) Begin precis:

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THE PLD PLATFORM

PLD PROGRAM

Presentation by Leonel Fernandez
My administration sought to reduce unemployment and poverty while improving institutions, respect for civil rights and a nation of laws. We persevered despite the systematic and irrational efforts of the opposition and the opposition-dominated Congress. History since 2000 shows that our orientation was correct. Logic and analysis demonstrate this; we should thank God that the past four years of PRD permit us to make the comparison.

The PLD has grown and matured in the interval; unlike other parties, it has carried out its internal processes in model fashion, with no crisis. Members of the party showed themselves capable in the first PLD administration; and we have obtained a level of organization and coherency that sets us apart from others. We offer, humbly, our experience and our desire to serve.

The PLD when elected will reinitiate the process of institutionalization and modernization. In the midst of crisis we will represent the people with dignity and decorum, confident that they and the country still have moral fiber and the ability to renew themselves.

Hundreds of individuals have collaborated on this party platform, conscious of their responsibilities. Taken together, it is a work strategy and the formal presentation of an engagement for which we seek the support of all Dominicans concerned in the future of their children and of the country.

General Lines

The Dominican Republic is currently in the most difficult moment of its history. Since 2000 the PRD has initiated a process of progressive deterioration causing crisis, uncertainty, despair and discouragement. The PRD government was inept in handling public expenditure, prejudicing savings, and showed ineffective management and administration. Comparative statistics bear this out.

Public finances are under pressure because of high levels of public debt taken on by the PRD; the impact of the quasi-fiscal (Central Bank) debt on fiscal goals; and excessive public employment, which will absorb more than 30 percent of revenue in 2004. The PLD says that public debt is 57 percent of GDP. Despite tax increases, the PRD government

has not restrained expenditures and so has not increased savings. The PRD opted for a policy of increasing public debt. The planned fiscal reform must include both tax changes and expenditure reductions.

The financial • was created by rumors, a banking liquidity crisis, • profound and serious irregularities in Baninter, • other banks with administrative and accounting problems, disrespect for banking norms, excessive advances and rediscounts by the Central Bank beyond the legal limits. Central Bank debt has grown to unsustainable levels. Banking supervision is insufficient and non-transparent, creating vulnerability to bank fraud.

Exchange rate policy has been erratic and often misguided. The peso has lost much of its value, reflecting a crisis of confidence and excessive monetary issue.

The cost of living rose 88 percent over 3 years of PRD administration.

Management of the electricity sector was irresponsible, complicated by devaluation and plagued by payment delays and a \$450 debt to generators at the end of 2003. The government's contradictory role as regulator and actor in the market for generation, transmission and distribution has caused distortions.

These factors have raised the poverty level and reduced the level of human development. Public services have deteriorated, particularly in education, due to the PRD's clientism and waste of state resources, including through corruption. Institutions have been greatly weakened.

IMF negotiations are outlined, as well as macroeconomic externalities. The post-September 11 global emphasis on security reduced the role of the international community in seeking solutions and protecting international norms such as sovereign equality and non-intervention. Multilateralism is still active, however. Third world groupings such as the &Group of 218 led by Brazil, India, South Africa and China, constitute an emerging new axis of political and economic power. The &Washington consensus• of the 1990's on orthodox economic management was insufficient in itself to create sufficient growth. The PLD and others are meditating on the need for more inclusive global policies, with a human face and development-oriented. The fight against world poverty is a priority.

Challenges

Four principal ones exist:

- 11. Recovering macroeconomic stability and resumption of growth;
- 12. Consolidate democratic governability by strengthening basic institutions
- 13. Improving competitiveness nationally and internationally; and
- 14. Achieving a better level of social equity for Dominican society.

Aims include:

- - Renegotiating internal and external debt through dialogue so as to make government finances viable.
- - Strengthening institutions
- - Modernizing productive sectors, industrial and agricultural
- - Achieving financial sustainability of the electricity sector
- - Creation of jobs through growth, aided by correct policies.
- - Consolidation of business conditions favorable to entrepreneurship.
- - Carrying out social policies to protect individuals and provide opportunity for all) employment creation, strengthening production, bettering education and training
- - Restructuring government expenditure toward social programs, with changes to make them more effective.
- - Improving education, including through public-private partnerships and stressing excellence.
- - Following social policy with a long-term vision that rises above the current administration and allows a gradual weaning from clientism and electoral populism.
- - Achieving transparent government, limiting discretion in interpreting laws and regulations, and acting honestly

Vision of a Development Model

The PLD advocates a social model of the marketplace, with greater solidarity for the least developed Dominicans and a defined, clear and focused fight against poverty.

"A democratic and social state of laws will not be an opponent of the market, but will move alongside the market, joining the private sector and civil society in promoting the changes needed to confront the challenges of the present and future . . . which requires modern management with qualified

personnel and agile, transparent administrative procedures to prevent corruption, inefficiency and theft."

Politics of the State and Institutions

Reform and modernization of the state and society is the general goal. The fragile democracy developed since the death of Trujillo in 1961 tends to be more authoritarian than participatory, based charismatic leadership, social inequality, and weak values. Further democratization, a central role for civil society, greater institutionalization and respect for citizens, rights, and more citizen participation are in order. The state must plan a strategy leading toward a society that is dignified, equitable, and democratic.

Political Reform

Needed strengthening of democratic institutions and participation will depend on creating a new legal-institutional framework and encouraging a new mode of citizen behavior.

Political Parties

- - Improve citizen representation and participation
- - Encourage internal democratization and better qualification of personnel
- - Encourage more responsible behavior by leaders to propose solutions to the country's problems

Electoral System

- - Strengthen the electoral system to eliminate partisan bias and ensure elections that follow the rules and democratic procedures
- - Select the judges and staff of the Central Electoral Tribunal (JCE) with the active participation of political parties and civil society

Constitutional Reform

- - Through a Constituent Assembly, thoroughly revise the constitution to be modern, developmentalist, democratic, and participatory, reaffirming the rule of law
- - Include institutional, economic, social, and political changes demanded by society

Reform of Public Administration

- - Change from a bureaucratic model to a management model of providing public services to citizens
- - Reorganize public administration to eliminate duplication and waste
- - Train and professionalize public employees
- - Instill transparency and ethics according to international norms
- - Strengthen development planning to ensure efficiency and citizen input
- - Develop an improvement program for public services to guarantee their quality, low cost, and continuity

Reform of the Presidency of the Republic

- - Redefine the functions of the Presidency to eliminate excessively centralized power and adopt a more modern collective decision model for the government
- - Create technical support capability for programming and management functions
- - Encourage creation of permanent coordination mechanisms with other government agencies, the business sector, and civil society organizations

Reform of the Legislative Branch

- - Institutionally strengthen the Congress to serve as an effective counterweight to the over-powerful executive
- - Stimulate legislators, accountability to society and transparency in their actions
- - Promote more effective dialogue, representation, and oversight by the National Congress

Reform of the Judicial Branch

- - Deepen the reforms since 1996, to make the judicial system democratic and efficient and judges, prosecutors, and other officials more independent and conscious of their role in society, and to provide full access to all citizens

Municipal Reform

- - Promote gradual territorial and administrative decentralization, with political, economic, and social effects on local communities
- - Promote political, financial, fiscal, and administrative autonomy for local governments, in line with the needs of local development

- - Consolidate decentralized public institutions establishing new relations between citizens, social groups, and their local territories

Reform of the Private Sector

- - Promote cooperative and complementary relations between Government and Marketplace
- - Stimulate social and environmental responsibility on the part of businesses
- - Encourage competitive practices that allow equal opportunities for all
- - Facilitate via the government access for the private sector to technology, modern administrative practices, and information sources useful for development

Reform of Civil Society

- - Promote the habit of responsible participation by civil society organizations to deepen democratization of the State and society
- - Establish regulations that permit development of civil society activities

Management of Government Reform

- - Prepare an "integral reform plan" during the transition period with detailed proposals for the four-year term
- - Establish priorities through dialogue, emphasizing demands for better public services, more transparency, and more citizen participation in public affairs
- - Establish a single agency to coordinate reform and appropriate communications mechanisms and strategies to improve effectiveness of reforms
- - Submit to Congress a package of necessary legal reforms
- - Make the budget process, in particular for 2005, an instrument of reform, adopting mechanisms such as management contracts and assessment of results
- - Organize dialogue with international institutions to raise the effectiveness of external assistance to the Dominican Republic to promote reforms

International Relations

The platform aims in general terms to return to an active, efficient and systematic approach to foreign policy. It criticizes the current government for a "significant deterioration" in foreign policy. The over-reaching goals include defense of territorial integrity and identity; defense and consolidation of "national sovereignty" in the face of globalization; and reintegration into the international scene with the objective of strengthening democratic governance and economic and social development of the country. Objectives and strategies are provided, in order, for foreign relations with: 1) Haiti, 2) the United States, 3) Latin America and the Caribbean, 4) Europe, 5) Spain, and 6) the rest of the world.

Specific Aims:

Haiti:

To work towards permanent and strong diplomatic relations with Haiti characterized by mutual responsibility, respect, and efficiency;

To continue the policy of encouraging the international community to support and stand with Haiti;

United States:

To sustain a policy of mutual respect and continuing collaboration in the areas of economics, politics, environment, culture, among various other themes.

To continue negotiating a U.S.-Dominican bilateral free trade agreement.

To comply with and strengthen various bilateral treaties and accords in order to improve security in the hemisphere and encourage cultural, scientific, technological and sports exchanges.

Latin America and the Caribbean:

To improve political, economic, commercial and cultural relations, especially in the Caribbean and Central America.

To foster the development of the possibility of a commercial accord between the Dominican Republic and CARICOM, strengthening the ties of the states in the region through commercial and cultural exchanges.

Europe

To increase relations with the European Union, especially in the areas of international policy, tourism, investment, commerce, technical cooperation, training and cultural exchanges.

Spain

To strengthen bilateral ties in the areas of commerce, cooperation and technological and academic exchanges.

Over-reaching goals

To return to an active, efficient and systematic foreign policy.
To defend and consolidate the National Sovereignty in the face of a globalized new world order.
Defend territorial integrity and identity and respect international treaties, accords and conventions.
To reinsert the DR on the international scene.

Economic Policies

The PLD introduces its economic platform by blaming the PRD for losing the economic stability and sustained growth achieved during the Fernandez government -- under the PRD unemployment has risen, government spending has accelerated with an unchecked policy of internal and external borrowing, and the PRD mismanaged the banking crisis, all of which led to "negative performance during these last years." The platform lists broad, ambitious objectives and delineates strategies. Strategies generally are broad objectives, most of them without specifics. Topics are macroeconomic policy, the industrial sector, tourism, agriculture, and sugar.

Macroeconomics

The macroeconomic policy calls for fiscal austerity, tax reform, sustainable debt, strict monetary policy, and a market-based exchange rate --but makes only veiled reference to the IMF standby agreement.

Trade

On trade, the PLD calls for increased competitiveness and continuation of the competitiveness program initiated under Mejia. Similarly, on tariffs, the platform sets an objective of establishing a regimen of tariffs &adjusted to the situation of openness.⁸ The PLD proposes to reintegrate the country into CARICOM's regional negotiating machinery⁸ while renewing strategic alliances and guarding the interests of small economies in all trade negotiating forums.

Other Aims of the Economic Platform:

Implement policies that encourage the return of capital and investment;
Apply monetary and fiscal policies conducive to stable internal prices, a stable exchange rate and stable interest rates;
Increase tax collections;
Establish a system of efficiency indicators for social spending -- especially in health and education;
Limit the growth of debt stock to the level of GDP growth;
Authorize issuance of new sovereign bonds so as to roll over current bond issues;
Strengthen the office of the Technical Secretary to manage international resources;
Improve the efficiency of the National Office of Industrial Property (ONAPI) in issuance of "trademarks, commercial names, and inventions";
Diversify free trade zones and initiate links with the domestic productive sector to increase competitiveness of domestic industries;
Improve quality, infrastructure, and environmental safeguards to become a leader in the tourism sector;
For agriculture, establish information exchange mechanism on prices and production; assure domestic production of food staples, improve technology, and remove barriers that create distortions (except for those that protect certain products under commercial agreements); and
revamp outdated sugar laws and exclude sugar from all trade negotiations for sufficient time to rehabilitate the sector

Environment

The PLD environment platform notes that the country has largely moved from a rural society to an urban one, so previous economic development models don't meet the needs of a continually growing population. The PLD asserts its modern vision for administering the State is based on the government's ethical contract with the people and a social obligation to identify a development model that meets the country's capacity and potential as a society. PLD proposals cover deforestation, destruction of coastal marine ecosystems, loss of biodiversity, the contamination of water resources and general environmental degradation. The PLD criticizes the current administration for failing to implement or abide by (environmental) Law 64-00, passed during the Fernandez Administration. The PLD will seek the rational use of resources and the development and strengthening of the national system of protected areas. The PLD says it will also reduce environmental pollution and establish an institutional framework of participative management.

Other Aims:

Urge decentralization of environmental measures, toward local municipalities through establishment and development of a National System of Environmental Management and of natural resources;

Reform the Constitution to require sustainable management of natural resources and the environment;

Promote establishment of a right to enjoy a healthy natural environment;

Take the necessary measures to organize the Secretariat of the Environment and Natural resources in a manner that complies with Law 64-00 -- and adhere to other provisions in the law;

Abide by international conventions and other commitments undertaken by the state and urge passage of legislation where necessary;

Engage civil society in environmental management;

Promote the reduction and recycling of solid wastes;

Adopt clean productive technologies;

Establish a framework to monitor the environment in selected areas of the largest population centers by 2006;

Develop alternatives to reduce the use of agrochemicals; and

Implement soil and water management technologies;

Energy

The PLD's energy platform consists of three sub-sectors: electricity, fuel and alternative energy.

The PLD introduces its energy platform by asserting that during its tenure, it confronted the grave problems of the electrical sub-sector by working simultaneously in two areas: meeting inherited short-term problems by adding 1000 megawatts of new and rehabilitated generating capacity; and seeking private sector participation in the generation and distribution of electricity. The PLD says the PRD politicized the privatization ("capitalization") process; instead of making necessary adjustments, the Mejia administration undertook "counter-reform," by signing the Madrid Accords (under which the GODR guaranteed negotiated tariff rates to the generators), and through the re-purchase of shares in national electricity distribution companies held by Spanish company Union Fenosa. The PLD alleges that bad PRD energy policy and currency depreciation (due to PRD policies) have brought the sector to the point of collapse. The PLD lists re-privatization of the distribution companies as an objective.

Infrastructure

The infrastructure platform addresses public works, transit and transportation and telecommunications.

In the area of public works, the PLD promises to eliminate political irregularities, define priorities and elicit private sector participation. In transportation the PLD assures the rights of citizens to have access to a system of transport that is efficient, safe, and reliable. For telecommunications, the PLD asserts that the current regulatory body is inadequate and unrepresentative -- it lacks balance and the multi-disciplinary knowledge required to regulate a sector in need of innovation and legal, financial, technical decisions.

Aims:

Strengthen the role of the electricity regulator;

Strive to repay the debt in the sector;

Conclude the process of converting the independent power producers to merchant plants that sell on the spot market;

Establish a cost-based tariff;

Guarantee just treatment of users of electrical services;

Create a Fuels Superintendency;

Encourage the use of alternative energy resources;

Define a policy for priorities in infrastructure development based on development plans;

Resolve the institutional disorder created by the dispersion of many institutions with similar functions and the same level of hierarchy; and

Redesign the telecom regulatory body so that its composition reflects the many disciplines required to take decisions in a sector of this nature.

Social Policies

The PLD says that civil society's "intervention" in the democratic process is a fairly recent phenomenon, demonstrating mistrust and questioning of excessive and exclusionary behavior by political parties and the state. There is no clear differentiation between corporate interest

organizations (national or international) and the civic organizations representing communities and society at large.

Aims:

Promote responsible civil society participation in order to deepen democratization of the state and of society in general;

Stimulate a regulatory system that allows for the development and consolidation of civil society actions;

Encourage discussion of a Law on Social Participation to assure the widest participation possible of civil society organizations;

Regulate NGO activities by establishing mechanisms for accounting for the origin and use of funds;

Promote financial support for NGO social programs as part of the fight against poverty; and

Support programs that encourage institutional capacity of NGOs.

Human Rights and Public Security

The centrist and bureaucratic Dominican government provides inadequate security because responsibilities are divided and uncoordinated. The government has traditionally relied on the police force principally for control and social/political discipline. The history of human rights abuses demonstrates the inability of the police as currently managed to protect and serve. State institutions and the people should be committed to ensuring quality of life for all and a functioning democracy.

Aims:

Encourage the transformation of the National Police into a public security force with moral authority to protect society, to develop professionalism and to overcome negative perceptions of incompetence and repressive force;

Provide protection and public security to reduce criminality without putting at risk individual rights, due process or rule of law;

Support the application of the new Criminal Procedures Code and the Public Ministry Career Statute;

Promote the application of the new Police Reform Law;

Create a National Institute for Security and Criminal Policy dedicated to studies and analyses of the Dominican public security situation;

Establish an information system to keep track of offenses committed in various police stations, poor neighborhoods and provinces; and

Centralize authority and control of prisons into one institution by creating a Police Penitentiary Agency.

Social Policies

Poverty and the unequal distribution of wealth are the principle threats to social integration.. The indicators of societal downturn are evident, including but not limited to malnutrition, an increase in endemic diseases, high infant and maternal mortality rates and rising illiteracy rates. Current social conditions require better government policies.

The government's main instrument the budget; increasing social expenditures will improve conditions. The platform's social policies are broad in scope and cover the following themes: population and development, vulnerable populations (the disabled, children and adolescents, the elderly), women's issues, Dominicans living abroad, social security, education and health.

Aims:

Assure the efficiency, rationale and focus of public spending for social programs;

Increase international funding for programs on education, health and sanitation;

Promote access to a quality education for all Dominicans regardless of socio-economic class and geographic regions;

Guarantee basic social services to children and adolescents, especially those in vulnerable situations;

Promote women's employment in nontraditional occupations;

Reduce domestic violence and improve application of the Law Against Domestic Violence;

Launch a national campaign targeting women about HIV/AIDS and prevention;

Establish and strengthen implementation mechanisms for the new Law Against Trafficking and Alien Smuggling and other laws protecting women;

Create the necessary conditions for better access to low-cost health care;

Develop a pension system that will prevent the loss or reduction in wages in retirement.

Defense and National Security

There is no National Security law and the existing Armed Forces Law is inadequate. With no national defense policy it is difficult to elaborate doctrine and strategies, the size of the armed forces, or the participation in international events. The society has no discussed reform and modernization of the forces or influenced them about their role in defense and democracy. Training is inadequate for duties and functions. Military education has little to do with national needs. Benefits are granted on a personal rather than an institutional basis. Budgeting is improvised and heavily influenced by the personal interest of administrators and financial managers. Supply is deficient. The military apply rules of engagement for war when called on to deal with street disturbances. There is no planning but rather constant improvisation.

Aims:

Define a defense and national security policy, establish a legal format and engage all sectors in a national defense community.

Improve coordination with foreign policy, coordinating with international organizations

Prepare the military for this new environment, improve training, establish education and training oriented to support of democracy; improve mobility and efficiency

Realize substantial savings in the defense budget, adjusting expenditures to institutional needs) with active coordination between the military and the Congress through existing channels

Improving living conditions, interest personnel in good moral and social conduct including with a Code of Military Ethics

Strategies:

Define a defense policy, draft and submit a Law on Security and Defense, study the threats to the nation and the Caribbean

Strengthen participation in regional defense and security mechanisms to increase mutual understanding and transparency

Create a National Security Council

Revise the Basic Law of the Armed Forces along with internal regulations for the branches

Draft a Code of Ethics and Morals for the military; strengthen this with education

Establish a classification of military positions and their functions and procedures

Redistribute and relocate units according to current threats

Establish a smaller hierarchy with greater operational effectivenessx

Inventory and review property and real estate belonging to the military

Establish a program for personal loans, define social security policies and health programs

Implement disciplinary regulations for corruption and means to separate those bringing discredit to the institution

Establish a budget more closely aligned to reality

(END PRECIS)

13. (U) Drafted by Santo Domingo EcoPol officers.

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